

# Alonso de Cartagena: Nation, Miscegenation, and the Jew in Late-Medieval Castile

BRUCE ROSENSTOCK

## Cartagena and the Imagination of the Spanish "Nation"

Perhaps the most influential intellectual figure in fifteenth-century Castile was Alonso de Cartagena (1385–1456), Castile's spokesman at the Council of Basle (1434–1439), Bishop of Burgos (1435–1456), and author of vernacular and Latin histories of Spain which set the tone for subsequent historiography. In addition, Cartagena composed one of the first defenses of the converso caste's prerogatives in the long history of the "purity of blood" dispute which erupted in 1449 when the Toledo rebels, seeking autonomy from Juan II of Castile, issued their anti-converso *Sentencia-Estatuto*. Cartagena was himself a converso, baptized in his early childhood together with father, Rabbi Solomon Halevi (Pablo de Santa María after his baptism).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the rebellion in Toledo and the following anti-converso persecution, see B. Netaanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (New York: Random House, 1995), 314–50. For biographies of Alonso de Cartagena, see *Intento de un diccionario biográfico y bibliográfico de autores de la provincia de Burgos*, ed. Manuel Martínez Añibarro (Madrid: Manuel Tello, 1889), 88–115; L. Serrano, *Los conversos Pablo de Santa María y Alonso de Cartagena* (Madrid: C. Bermejo, 1942) and F. Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María* (Madrid: C. Bermejo, 1952); for briefer accounts, see R. B. Tate, "The *Anacephaleosis* of Alfonso García de Santa María, Bishop of Burgos, 1435–1456," *Hispanic Studies* in *Honour of I. Gonzales Llubera*, ed. Frank Pierce, (Oxford: Dolphin Book Co. Ltd., 1959), 387–401, and Netaanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition*, 518–27. Pablo de Santa María was also a prolific writer, author of a *historia mundi* and of a full biblical commentary which was widely published together with that of Nicolas de Lyra. Pablo de Santa María was appointed to be the bishop of Burgos, the post his son took over at his father's death. The Cartagena family was truly remarkable; Pablo's granddaughters (Alonso's nieces) wrote the first Spanish work of auto-consolation about living with a disability (she was deaf) and the first defense of a woman's equal claim to literary creativity (after critics denied she could have written the memoir by herself). On Teresa, see Alan Deyermond, "El Convento de Dolonçias: The Works of Teresa de Cartagena," *Journal of Hispanic Philology* 1 (1976): 19–29 and Dayle

This paper examines Cartagena to his conception of the nation: arising through productive miscegenation, a profound tension between a national identity legitimized through the Goths). We may better understand it within the terms provided by the converso caste can be seen as "cultural hybridity," unsettling the colonial theory, however, it is apparent in the construction of a central role in the construction of the Spanish nation (natio) idea of the Spanish nation (natio) point, has also stressed the decision, although he revealed such people had revealed such himself.<sup>3</sup> R. B. Tate, although he not believe that at the beginning most faithful picture of the Hisp Castile with respect to England. Cartagena made to the Council of Castile with respect to England. When Américo Castro in the first time that Spain comes to a distinct character, he chooses to pose the tone for subsequent historiography. In addition, Cartagena composed one of the first defenses of the converso caste's prerogatives in the long history of the "purity of blood" dispute which erupted in 1449 when the Toledo rebels, seeking autonomy from Juan II of Castile, issued their anti-converso *Sentencia-Estatuto*. Cartagena was himself a converso, baptized in his early childhood together with father, Rabbi Solomon Halevi (Pablo de Santa María after his baptism).<sup>1</sup>

Seidenspinner-Núñez, "El solo de m Poetics in *Admiración operum Dei* of 14–23. Teresa de Cartagena's writings are available in *The Writings of Teresa de Cartagena*, ed. R. B. Tate, (Boydell & Brewer, 1998).<sup>2</sup> A. Castro, *The Structure of Spain* (Boydell & Brewer, 1998).<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 14. Tate, "The *Anacephaleosis* of Alonso de Cartagena," *Hispanic Studies* in *Honour of I. Gonzales Llubera*, ed. Frank Pierce, (Oxford: Dolphin Book Co. Ltd., 1959), 387–401, and Netaanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition*, 518–27. Pablo de Santa María was also a prolific writer, author of a *historia mundi* and of a full biblical commentary which was widely published together with that of Nicolas de Lyra. Pablo de Santa María was appointed to be the bishop of Burgos, the post his son took over at his father's death. The Cartagena family was truly remarkable; Pablo's granddaughters (Alonso's nieces) wrote the first Spanish work of auto-consolation about living with a disability (she was deaf) and the first defense of a woman's equal claim to literary creativity (after critics denied she could have written the memoir by herself). On Teresa, see Alan Deyermond, "El Convento de Dolonçias: The Works of Teresa de Cartagena," *Journal of Hispanic Philology* 1 (1976): 19–29 and Dayle

This paper examines Cartagena's defense of the conversos in relation to his conception of the national identity of Spain. We will find in Cartagena a profound tension between a conception of national identity as arising through productive miscegenation (between Jew and gentile) and a national identity legitimized through an unbroken racial lineage (that of the Goths). We may better understand this tension, I will suggest, if we frame it within the terms provided by recent postcolonial theory. Cartagena's recourse to the notion of productive miscegenation to defend the converso caste can be seen as exemplifying the discursive strategy of "cultural hybridity," unsettling the nation's representation of itself as possessing a homogeneous and integral identity. Before turning to postcolonial theory, however, it is appropriate to begin with Américo Castro's classic work, *España en su Historia* (translated as *The Structure of Spanish History*),<sup>2</sup> in which not only Cartagena, but the entire converso caste, play a central role in the construction of Spanish national identity.

When Américo Castro in the opening of his work wants to mark the first time that Spain comes to consciousness of itself as a nation with a distinct character, he chooses the speech which, in 1434, Alonso de Cartagena made to the Council of Basle asserting the precedence of Castile with respect to England. After describing Cartagena's "first and most faithful picture of the Hispanic soul," Castro goes on to state, "I do not believe that at the beginning of the fifteenth century any other European people had revealed such a complete and precise awareness of itself."<sup>3</sup> R. B. Tate, although he might disagree with Castro on this last point, has also stressed the decisive role of Cartagena in constructing the idea of the Spanish nation (*natio*):<sup>4</sup>

Seidenspinner-Núñez, "El solo de me leyó: Gendered Hermeneutics and Subversive Poetics in *Admiración operum Dey* of Teresa de Cartagena," *Medievalia* 15 (1981): 14-23. Teresa de Cartagena's writings, together with a short discussion of her family, are available in *The Writings of Teresa de Cartagena*, trans. Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez (Boydell & Brewer, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> A. Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History*, trans. E. King (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>4</sup> Tate, "The *Anacaphorosis* of Alfonso García de Santa Marta," 387-401, points out that the seating at the Council of Basle was by nation, not by dioceses or provinces. In Cartagena's successful defense of the precedence of the Castilian delegation over the English, "it is clear," Tate writes, that "the Castilians conceived of their representation in somewhat the same terms as the English" for whom the nation (*natio*) was a "microcosm of Church and State, a unit of imperium mirroring the sovereignty of its master" (391 n7).



The meteoric rise of Castile from a Peninsular kingdom, racked by civil discord for centuries, to a European and colonial power has always had a fascination for the historian. The credit for arousing this interest must naturally go to the historians of the *Siglo de Oro*. Yet they did not create *ex nihilo* their concept of the destiny and obligations of the "Spanish" nation that were to become current throughout 16th- and 17th-century Europe.... The *Anacephaleosis*, or epitome, by Alfonso García de Santa María, Bishop of Burgos is ... in fact one of the first explicit testimonies of Castile's awareness of her own past and the individual role she claimed for herself during the Late Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup>

Both Castro and Tate stress the fact that the idea of nationality in Spain was, in Tate's words, "the product of a slow elaboration."<sup>6</sup> Castro especially wants to explode the notion that Spain possesses a racially or ethnically defined character, and he insists that, whatever national identity Spain may have, it is the product of the cultural *imaginary*, as we might say today, and it "always already" calls itself into question. In the last analysis, according to Castro, Spain's "identity" has less to do with any fixed essence than with the effort to imagine an essence which could embrace (or perhaps homogenize) its geographic and cultural diversity and weather all historical vicissitudes. Every such imagined "Hispanic" essence was fraught with internal contradictions, and seemed always to be refuted even as it was offered up as the definitive summation of the nation's identity. In effect, Spain seems to be constantly creating itself anew. After having quoted from both Ortega y Gasset and a Fascist Phalanx propaganda pamphlet to the effect that throughout her history "Spain has not been herself," Castro writes:

But what can the reality be of a present that is always felt as having its temporal foundations undermined, as being inverted? It can be nothing other than a recreating of itself as if the world were beginning anew in every instant, in a continuous process of creating-wasting.... The sustained consciousness of existence as a nonexistence, of putting to a test time and again the possibility of the

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 387-88.  
<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 387.

impossibility, is without parallel.<sup>7</sup>

Castro's interpretation of the national identity (which he writes "unliving") seems in many ways to be of the idea of nationhood. Homi Bhabha's critique of national self "slippage" between the image of nation to its past and the equation into being through a deliberate act of self-creation. Though both old and new, ancient and immigrant and the colonial contradiction in the construction playfully revealing the immigrant (a latecomer to the nation) and "Unable (and unwilling) to be situated the 'foreign' other unsettles the shared contemporaneity among Bhabha's theorization of the construction of national identity. Castro's formulation of "vibrant" Hispanic national construction in the construction of the idea of (re)dedication to a mission who in the fifteenth century, Al

<sup>7</sup> Castro, *The Structure of Spanish* (1994), especially chapter 8, "Disorder." See, for example, Homi Bhabha, *The Modern Nation*.  
<sup>8</sup> While we may agree with Bhabha that the future of the Peninsula, to subsist, had to be unique to any nation, we may also have changed their thousand-year-old and future all the greater, and the

impossibility, is without parallel in either the Occident or the Orient.<sup>7</sup>

Castro's interpretation of the continuously self-deconstructing Spanish

national identity (which he writes of as "vivir desvivíendose," "living by unliving") seems in many ways to resonate with recent postcolonial critiques of the idea of nationhood. Homi Bhabha, for example, has attempted to show that no nation has a seamless and integral identity, despite its best efforts at representing itself as temporally and spatially "pluritudinous."<sup>8</sup> Bhabha's critique of national self-representation lays great stress upon the "slippage" between the image of the nation's organic and unbroken connection to its past and the equally significant image of the nation as coming into being through a decision of the collective will, through a deliberate act of self-creation. The nation, more simply, represents itself as both old and new, ancient and youthful. For Bhabha, the writing of the immigrant and the colonial subject takes advantage of this temporal contradiction in the construction of the nation, generating confusion by playfully revealing the immigrant or colonial subject to be both "too new" (a latecomer to the nation) and "too old" (backward and tradition-bound). Unable (and unwilling) to be simply contemporaneous with the nation, the "foreign" other unsettles the nation's sense of its own present as a shared contemporaneity among a people who are "equally" old and new.

Bhabha's theorization of the temporal fault-lines, so to speak, in the construction of national identity can perhaps help to bring into focus Castro's formulation of "vivir desvivíendose" as the defining feature of Hispanic national construction. We might say that there are two moments in the construction of the idea of Spanish nationhood, namely, the discovery of a continuous tradition reaching into the past and the collective (re)dedication to a mission whose fulfillment lies in the future.<sup>9</sup>

In the fifteenth century, Alonso de Cartagena and others after him

<sup>7</sup> Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History*, 59.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), especially chapter 8, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation."

<sup>9</sup> While we may agree with Bhabha that this Janus-faced temporality is not unique to any nation, we may also agree with Castro that the fact that "a corner of the Peninsula, to persist, had to destroy Islamized Spain, in which even the rivers had changed their thousand-year-old names" makes the temporal chasm between past and future all the greater, and the need to bridge it all the more pressing (*Structure of Spanish History*, 54).



hoped to discover Spain's identity in its people's unique mission to advance the Church Militant.<sup>10</sup> Cartagena returns to a thirteenth-century historiographic trope, namely, the divinely destined conquest of *Hispania* by the Goths who, he says, were as well-matched to the Peninsula which they invaded as were the Israelites to Canaan. In Cartagena's "neo-Gothic" thesis, the Goths provide the ethnic base not only for the unbroken succession of kings whose titles are *Rex Gothorum*, *Rex Hispaniae*, and *Rex Castillae*, but also for the military valor which is a basic trait of the Spaniard. Tate summarizes Cartagena's use of Gothic history in the *Anacephaleosis* this way:

The resume of Gothic history before the colonization of Spain is framed in highly eulogistic terms. The foundation of their reigning house antedates the times of Hercules and their subsequent conquests are conceived as extending over the greater part of Asia and Africa. But their major achievement was the capture of Rome. This devastation of Italy, coupled with a dissociation of Spain from the Empire are topics which become an integral part of Castilian history. They prove the superiority of the Goths who, after this display of military skill, are able to settle down and practice the arts in just as civilized fashion as the Romans.<sup>11</sup>

For Cartagena, the Goths are the divinely chosen ethnic stock whose talents for military conquest and the arts of civilization make them fitted to cultivate and be nurtured by the soil of the Peninsula. The Goths, then, are imagined as the people who give the history of Spain its continuity throughout the past. In his classic study of the origins of the notion of "Spain" in the medieval period, Jose Maravall has demonstrated that the argument below, gives us a different picture of the nation than the one foregrounded in Cartagena's other works.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the general tenor of political philosophy in Castile in the fifteenth century, see John Edwards, "Conversos, Judaism and the Language of Monarchy in Fifteenth-Century Castile," *Religion and Society in Spain, circa 1492*, ed. John Edwards (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 17:207-23. Edwards does not see anything specifically "converso" or Judaic about the political thought of Cartagena and others, most of them conversos, in the fifteenth century. However, he does not consider the evidence of Cartagena's *Defensorium unitatis christiana* which, as I will argue below, gives us a different picture of the nation than the one foregrounded in Cartagena's other works.

<sup>11</sup> Tate, "The *Anacephaleosis* of Alfonso Garcia de Santa Maria," 397-98. The *Anacephaleosis* is published in *Hispaniae Illustrata*, ed. Andreas Schottus (Frankfurt, 1603-8), vol. 1. A new edition of the *Anacephaleosis*, with commentary and translation into Spanish, appears in *La Anacephaleosis de Alonso de Cartagena: Edición, traducción, estudio*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1989).

"gothic thesis," whether in its thirteenth-century or its thirteenth-century form, was always a "myth" in the sense that Maravall calls a "myth" over the Iberian peninsula, the point of Africa, demonstrating the point of other postcolonial critics, that the "myth" is a colonialist project. The "myth" is grounded in the unbroken continuity of kings who defeated Roman rule. In one respect, however, Cartagena's thesis is different from whom the Castilian royal family expected given his own Jewish background. Sisebut's forced conversion of the thirteenth-century relies on the thirteenth-century historian's description of Sisebut's conversion. Cartagena has a very different view of the Gothic ethnic stock destiny, and we will examine this ethnic supremacy in no way able to settle down and practice the arts in just as civilized fashion as the Romans.<sup>11</sup>

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"gothic thesis," whether in its thirteenth-century or in its later instantiations, was always a "creación histórico-literaria."<sup>12</sup> Cartagena reactivates what Maravall calls a "myth" in order to justify the right of Castile to rule over the Iberian peninsula, the Canary Islands, and a portion of North Africa, demonstrating the point forcefully made by Homi Bhabha and other postcolonial critics, that the idea of the nation is always imbricated with a colonialist project. The "right" of "Castile" to become "Spain" is grounded in the unbroken continuity of its rulers with those of the Gothic kings who defeated Roman rule in the peninsula (and North Africa).

In one respect, however, Cartagena finds fault with the Gothic rulers from whom the Castilian royal line is allegedly descended. As we might expect given his own Jewish background, Cartagena is quite critical of Sisebut's forced conversion of the Jews in 613, and, although he otherwise relies on the thirteenth-century history of Jimenes de Rada, he omits that historian's description of Sisebut as "a wise man much dedicated to literature."<sup>13</sup> Cartagena has a very different idea about the way that the Jews will join the Gothic ethnic stock as the Spanish nation fulfills its divine destiny, and we will examine this below. I note here, however, that Gothic ethnic supremacy is in no way absolute or unqualified; Cartagena sees it as one element in a mixture, let us say hybridization, with the Jewish people. We will see that only this hybridization will ultimately "convert" the military valor of the Goths to a wholehearted dedication to their divine mandate, namely, the advance of the Church Militant throughout the world. According to Cartagena in his impassioned defense of the conversos (and the Jews) entitled *Defensorium unitatis christiana*,<sup>14</sup> the outbreak of what he calls the heresy of "paganism" in the mid-fifteenth-century anti-converso "purity of blood" statute in Toledo is, in fact, the greatest threat Spain faces to its mission.

It is no doubt remarkable that the construction of Spain's identity as a nation, with such emphasis placed upon the ethnic patrimony provided by the Goths, should be the work of a converso without any "Gothic blood" in his veins. It certainly does not escape Castro's notice that the first exponent of Spain's identity was a converso; indeed, for Castro, this fact is central to his general thesis in *The Structure of Spanish History*. The

<sup>12</sup> Jose Antonio Maravall, *El concepto de España en la edad media*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1964), 303.  
<sup>13</sup> Tate, "The *Anacephaleosis* of Alfonso García de Santa María," 389.  
<sup>14</sup> P. Manuel Alonso, S.I., ed., *D. Alonso de Cartagena: Defensorium unitatis christiana*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1943).

converso is someone who has refashioned his or her "given" identity and, from 1449 onwards (the first appearance of "purity of blood" legislation), lives in a society in which the "new" identity is called into question and problematized. When Castro describes Spaniards as "a people whose initial and constant problem is its insecurity and anguish concerning its own existence, its uncertainty, its living in a state of alarm caused by its doubt,"<sup>15</sup> he declares the paradigmatic nature of converso identity for all of Spain, and legitimizes his claim that conversos have been central to Spain's cultural self-definition.

The "Castro thesis" can be restated in terms of Bhabha's analysis of the disjunctive temporality of the nation. We may say that the converso writers as Castro understands them unsettle the image of a seamless national continuity from past to present because they place greater significance on the re-creation of the nation as "new" than on its perseverance on a course laid out for it in the past. The past is viewed not as the vital repository of the nation's strength, but as a process of degeneration and loss which needs to be reinvigorated through a rededication to the nation's mission. Whatever is vital in the past must be rescued rather than merely inherited. This raises a problem about how and to what extent the projected future can be said to be a "natural" outgrowth of the past. The problematization of the organic connection between past, present, and future leads to that "uncertainty of existence" which Castro identifies as ongoing throughout Spanish history. Cartagena attempts to solve this problem in his *Defensorium unitatis christiana* by positing that the relationship between the past (the "old" nation which must be renewed) and the future (the "new" nation assuming the mantle of its divine mission) is mediated by the present as a time of conception, a time where two "parents" will disappear and be reborn as a new offspring. Cartagena identifies the national "father" as the Gothic race, the blood of whose kings and nobles continues to flow in the veins of Castile's kings and nobles, while the national "mother" is the Jewish people whose divine mission and priestly nobility can be revived if its aged body is provided a new form in a youthful child of "mixed" blood. Cartagena suggests that in their offspring, the features of both parents will remain discernible, though we will see that he hints that the Jewish physiognomy will be the more pronounced. Cartagena's selection of miscegenation as the mediating bond between a Gothic past and a Spanish future is a strategy for envisioning national

<sup>15</sup> Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History*, 25.

## The Jew as Essen in the *Defensorium*

identity which, according to Homi Bhabha, is characteristic of the "marginal" through which the nation is constituted, "gentile," "Jew," "Muslim," "noble," "infidel," "male" and "female," amor representation of national identity unsettles it. Although Cartagena is renewing the Spanish nation through finding that he also parodies his opposition the nation by legislating against mixture. In what follows I will examine in detail between Cartagena's construction in *Hispania* as a nation uniquely chosen which is prominent in his other his understanding of the role of the Jew the necessary "stock" with which Spain ductively hybridized. Although Cart appropriated by later writers, his und be roundly rejected in the later five statutes begin to become the law of the "shape" which the Spanish nation was model for ethnic unity based upon the His hopes were tragically unfulfilled and impunity. By studying Cartagena's dis be able not only to see with increase idea of the nation and the idea of hybrid converso was, from the fifteenth century this tension at the very heart of



identity which, according to Homi Bhabha and other postcolonial critics, is characteristic of the "marginal" writer who reconfigures the signs through which the nation is constituted (in the case of Spain, "Goth," "gentile," "Jew," "Muslim," "noble," "vulgar," "pure," "impure," "faithful," "infidel," "male" and "female," among others) and produces a "hybrid" representation of national identity which at once "renews" the nation and unsettles it. Although Cartagena is very serious about his project of renewing the Spanish nation through the mixing of two peoples, we will find that he also parodies his opponents' alternative project of renewing the nation by legislating against mixture.

In what follows I will examine in greater detail the intimate connection between Cartagena's construction in the *Defensorium unitatis christianaee Hispaniae* as a nation uniquely chosen to lead the Church Militant, a view which is prominent in his other historiographic works as well, and his understanding of the role of the Jew in the fulfillment of this mission, as the necessary "stock" with which Spanish-Gothic "gentility" can be productively hybridized. Although Cartagena's historiography of Spain is appropriated by later writers, his understanding of the role of the Jew will be roundly rejected in the later fifteenth century when "purity of blood" statutes begin to become the law of the land. Cartagena had discerned the "shape" which the Spanish nation was taking, and he hoped to provide a model for ethnic unity based upon the productive hybridization of peoples. His hopes were tragically unfulfilled as the nation stigmatized hybridity as impurity. By studying Cartagena's dream of productive hybridity we will be able not only to see with increased sharpness the tension between the idea of the nation and the idea of hybridity, but also to appreciate how the converso was, from the fifteenth century onward, the one who emblemized this tension at the very heart of the Spanish nation.

### The Jew as Essential for Salvation in the *Defensorium unitatis christianaee*

In order to appreciate the innovative nature of Cartagena's views on the Jews, we need to see it against the background of the normative Catholic doctrine, expressed for example by Augustine, that the Jewish people are no longer part of "salvation history," but are merely caught in a sort of temporal "limbo" until they will be erased from history at the Last Judgment.

ment.<sup>16</sup> This view sees the Jews as "outside" both the Church and its "militant" mission to bring salvation to humanity. The Jews, on this view, rejected salvation and, as a people, are judged to be "cadavers" without vital connection to God. While a single Jew may always find salvation in Christ (something the racialists deny, taking the Augustinian view to its extreme), the Jews as a people cannot.

Cartagena argues that the Jewish people do remain part of redemption history, and we may see this first of all in his explanation of why they have not yet converted to Christianity. The explanation of the Jewish people's rejection of the Gospel comes first in an extended analogy which Cartagena offers for the spread of God's revelation. He compares revelation to the rising sun. The sun's noonday splendor is compared to the inception of the apostolic mission when the Holy Spirit descended, in the likeness of fiery tongues, upon the apostles' heads in Jerusalem on the first post-crucifixion Pentecost. Cartagena describes how the sun's rays extend to the farthest, coldest extremes of earth in circles radiating out from the center, which, in the analogy, corresponds to Jerusalem. Cartagena likens these widening circles of illumination and heat to the widening range of the Church Militant's preaching over the course of time. Using a verse from Isaiah as his proof text ("Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be carried in the arms," Isaiah 60:4),<sup>17</sup> Cartagena describes the final triumphant moment when all peoples shall be joined together as one people, as the homecoming of the most distant "sons" to the center point where the sun shines brightest, to the spiritual Jerusalem which is the Church. Cartagena states that the appellation "sons" is appropriate for the gentle nations, since the "masculine sex" characterizes best those who excel others by the "strength of their arms and extent of their lands" (1.9, 87).<sup>18</sup> The daughters, however, "designate the Jewish people" who, like daughters in their paternal home, "have remained within the fixed limits of the promised land" (1.9, 87-88). Cartagena is using a

<sup>16</sup> Augustine explains in *Civitas Dei* 18:46 that the Jews are allowed by God to continue their existence as a people in order to serve as (hostile, and therefore credible) witnesses to the authenticity of the "Old Testament" prophecies which the Church interprets as referring to Jesus.  
<sup>17</sup> Unless otherwise specified, translations from the King James Version.  
<sup>18</sup> Translations throughout are my own. References are to part, theorem, and chapter divisions of the *Defensorium*, followed by page(s) in the P. Manuel Alonso edition; a Spanish translation appears in *Alonso de Cartagena y el Defensorium unitatis christiane*, ed. Guillermo Verdín-Díaz (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1992).

phrase he used earlier in chapter 5, "From these divisions [between] arisen the difference among people. One group, few and peculiar, remain under the written law. The other, power, spread through all the dispersed, without the law of god." Given his apparently unqualified identification of the Jewish people, Cartagena intends "land" to refer metaphorically to the people's life in diaspora. And, remaining laws to hold the people within a sin phorical, whereas the nations are "dispersed," until they have been brought within the adjective "dispersed" to the Jewish people at the center, in the part of the periphery. In his use of the pride of place to the Jewish people, I would characterize this displacement ("dispersed") to the gentle nations as "hybrid writing" which "contests gentility to cultural supremacy and historical into question with his reassignment of the gentile peoples is any genealogy of where they have come from that is significant. We may recall Cartagena's use of the his *Anacephaleosis*. To choose the Romans is to privilege the mobile, natives, and this certainly serves Cartagena's imperialism, such as it was in the mobility of the Goths also indicates that this is done through their "marriage people have always been 'at home' land," that is, within the limits of a divine mission. As carnal Israel, however, their fulfilled future and reside only

<sup>19</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*

phrase he used earlier in chapter 5, which begins:

From these divisions [between Jews and gentiles], therefore, has arisen the difference among peoples which has lasted for so long. One group, few and peculiar, remain within the fixed land of promise under the written law. The other, great in number and grand in power, spread through all the regions of the globe, have lived dispersed, without the law of god contained in scripture. 1.5, 75

Given his apparently unqualified identification of the daughters with all the Jewish people, Cartagena intends the "fixed limits of the promised land" to refer metaphorically to the laws which fix the limits of the people's life in diaspora. And, remarkably, Cartagena understands these laws to hold the people within a single territory, even if it is only metaphorical, whereas the nations are "dispersed" which lack these laws, as all do until they have been brought within the Church. By thus reassigning the adjective "dispersed" to the gentile nations, Cartagena places the Jewish people at the center, in the paternal home, and the gentile peoples at the periphery. In his use of the Isaianic proof text, Cartagena gives pride of place to the Jewish people over the gentile peoples.

I would characterize this displacement of a trope associated with the Jews ("dispersed") to the gentile nations as a strategy of what Bhabha calls "hybrid writing" which "contests genealogies of 'origin' that lead to claims to cultural supremacy and historical superiority."<sup>19</sup> What Cartagena calls into question with his reassignment of "dispersed" as a predicate of the gentile peoples is any genealogy of origin for the gentile peoples. It is not where they have come from that is significant, but where they are heading. We may recall Cartagena's use of the Goths to anchor Castilian history in his *Minapthallosis*. To choose the Goths over, say, the earlier Hispano-Romans is to privilege the mobile, conquering people over the sedentary natives, and this certainly serves Cartagena's purpose of justifying Castilian imperialism, such as it was in the mid-fifteenth century. However, the mobility of the Goths also indicates that they need to be "brought home," and this is done through their "marriage" to the Jewish people. The Jewish people have always been "at home" in the "fixed limits of the promised land," that is, within the limits defined by God's choice of them to bear a divine mission. As carnal Israel, however, they have been severed from their fulfilled future and reside only in the past of the "promise." Mixed

<sup>19</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 157.



with the mobile people who always push away from their physical home to new territories, they will be carried over to their promised home, a "spiritual" Jerusalem. When the centrifugal impulse of the gentile peoples (outward to the ends of the globe) is finally married to the centripetal impulse of the Jewish people (return to Jerusalem), salvation history will have reached its telos.

In the image of familial reconciliation, the gentile "sons" enter the

home of the father, the spiritual Jerusalem, by being joined to the father's daughters, with whom they will create a new people, "one true Jerusalem" ("ex utroque populo una vera Iherusalem," 1.9, 88). The Jewish people do not need to leave behind their identities in order to enter into the "true Jerusalem." It is almost as if the transformation will take place of itself, when the gentile peoples have all converted: "For Jerusalem has not converted to the gentiles, but gentile people are converting to Jerusalem.... Nor does Israel receive the gods of the gentiles, but the gentiles have received the God of Israel" (1.9, 88). The Jewish people, in other words, have no distance to traverse to achieve redemption; they only have to receive a fuller illumination from the meridian sun of divine love. Again, Cartagena is deploying a literary strategy best compared to that of the marginal discourses of hybridity: taking the term used for the minority ("converted," *conversus*) and reassigning it to the majority, thereby calling

into question the integral self-image of the dominant group.

The subordination of gentiles to Jews at the consummation of history

is the central thrust of Isaiah 60, the source of Cartagena's proof text. It seems likely that Isaiah 60 stands behind the entire extended analogy which Cartagena develops in this section of his work. The conclusion of Isaiah 60 invokes the image of divine illumination over Jerusalem, replacing the illumination of sun and moon: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isaiah 60:19). In terms of Cartagena's analogy, this prophecy refers to the time when all gentile nations shall be encompassed within the light of Christ, and the Jews will once more be the faithful "daughters" of God. No doubt, this means that the Jews will accept Christ, but it is important to point out that the Jews' conversion does not signify a loss of Israel's precedence over the gentiles. The gentiles (the "sons" in Isaiah 60:9), it should be remembered, will carry the Jews (the "daughters") back to Jerusalem in their arms.

But what is delaying the final redemption of the Jews as projected in Isaiah 60? Cartagena makes no mention of the clichéd "Jewish blindness"

in order to explain why carnal Israel Christian faith. Rather, the implication "enlightenment" is due to the continuing building of the "true Jerusalem" as Cartagena speaks of the gentiles and daughters to come together, and unconverted sons, God's daughters in the church. In other words, the Jews in the conversion of all the gentiles. The proof text from the New Testament justifies his assertion that the Jewish history is Paul's Epistle to the Romans does in any other text to caution non-Jews for their rejection of Jesus. Once you did not have faith in mercy because of their lack of faith, believed [in Jesus] for the sake of receive mercy. God brings everyone to bring everyone within his mercy.<sup>2</sup> Paul makes the Jews' faithlessness an mercy to the non-Jews. Furthermore, lifted, and in a verse just before the has touched a part of Israel until the faith], and so all Israel shall be saved twice, and he goes so far as to say that in his own day are a sign that the redemption will be fulfilled: "The more plausible it is to convert, the more plausible it is to universal judgment" (2.2.3, 127). For

in order to explain why carnal Israel has not "seen the light" of the Christian faith. Rather, the implication is that the delay in full Jewish "enlightenment" is due to the continuing need for *two* streams to join in the building of the "true Jerusalem." Later in his *Defensorium* (2.3.6), Cartagena speaks of the gentiles and the Jews as two rivers that flow together into the single sea of the Church. He sees the end of the influx of water from the rivers to be a complete "drying up" of all faithlessness, both Jewish and gentile. At that time the Church will constitute a single, undivided people, in the image of a new Adam whose head is Christ. Significantly, the drying up of the two kinds of faithlessness is described as happening simultaneously. Humanity's unification requires both sons and daughters to come together, and, therefore, so long as there are unconverted sons, God's daughters can only partially be absorbed within the church. In other words, the Jewish people are playing a necessary role in the conversion of all the gentiles.

The proof text from the New Testament which Cartagena uses to justify his assertion that the Jewish people remain a part of redemptive history is Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in which Paul goes farther than he does in any other text to caution non-Jewish Christians against condemning the Jews for their rejection of Jesus as the messiah:

Once you did not have faith in God, but now you have received mercy because of their lack of faith. Just as they now have not believed [in Jesus] for the sake of your mercy, so will they also receive mercy. God brings everyone into faithlessness so that he can bring everyone within his mercy.<sup>20</sup>

Romans 11:30-32

Paul makes the Jews' faithlessness an essential step in God's extension of mercy to the non-Jews. Furthermore he states that the faithlessness will be lifted, and in a verse just before the one just quoted he says, "Blindness has touched a part of Israel until the fullness of the gentiles enters [the faith], and so all Israel shall be saved." Cartagena quotes this passage twice, and he goes so far as to say that the numerous conversions of Jews in his own day are a sign that the final judgment is approaching when redemption will be fulfilled: "The more frequently and abundantly Jews convert, the more plausible it is that we are approaching the day of universal judgment" (2.2.3, 127). For Cartagena, the Jewish people, far

<sup>20</sup> For Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I have used the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.



from being enemies of Christ and locked out of salvation history, stand at its center and provide its driving force. The real enemies of Christianity, says Cartagena, are those who would claim a racial prerogative for the gentiles in redemption history. He calls such people "paganizers":

Those who, like the Philistines before, are now leaping to attack the Israelites who have become faithful Catholics, profess themselves in their actions to have remained up to the present pagans and ... to be battling the army of the faithful with their paganizing.

3. Prol., 270

Here is one of Cartagena's boldest moves. He takes the claim of the anti-converso party to be "pure blood" and stigmatizes this as the heresy of "paganizing"; he also denigrates the blood itself as tainted by "pagan," that is, low-born, blood. It could not have escaped his reader's notice that this word carried a connotation of non-noble origin. Indeed, Cartagena in this very passage explicitly drives home the point by saying, "I will not use the term 'gentilizing' because the word has acquired in common usage a certain appearance [*speciem*] of nobility." Renaming his opponents "pagans" rather than "gentiles," and even calling into question the genetic link between "gentility" and "nobility," Cartagena reveals the disjunction between the linguistic sign and its "common" referent, thus opening up a space for reinscribing or, better put, ingrafting a new people into the new nation he imagines. It should certainly come as no surprise when Cartagena says that the "nobility" of the Jewish people, marred by their "infidelity" over the centuries, can and will recover its prior glory:

Such is the victory by which our faith conquers the world that those who have been conquered will themselves be conquerors too, and it is not unfitting that when they rise up again through the vigor of the faith, although they had been dead before, the cadavers, as it were, of their nobility which had been lying beside them will also rise with them.

2.4.9, 213

The renewal of the Jewish people will renew their nobility; in particular, their priestly nobility will be renewed, says Cartagena. Of course, his father and he are already proof of this, since they stem from the Levitical tribe and have, as Christians, returned to their ancestral role as priests.

## The Hybrid English and the German

The Third Theorem of Part Two re-enters into the Catholic faith through not remain two peoples or diverse rarely arriving groups, one new people describes the conflict between the new between the brutal power of the gentile. Cartagena sees the new pagan gentile savagery which initially commissions. In the early history of the defeated by the physical meekness and defense was the word of God. Car arising from a valorization among not own day, of masculine physical prove reaching back to Abraham, includes fact which signals God's own scorn virility which is self-abnegating (sym- sion) and sublimated into a spiritual Cartagena points out, however, Jesus's were two non-Israelites: Rah who saves the lives of spies sent by J, grandmother of Boaz, Ruth, wed Naomi, is the great-grandmother already mingled with Israelite "blood" sees the engendering of Jesus as a typ- tion of gentiles and Jews into one ne- ized virility. Since Cartagena sees culmination of redemption, it is Jesus or his resurrection which, for Cartagena Christ for Cartagena represents d within the single body of the Church that Jesus's genealogical relationship women is "not lacking sacred myste He offers as his first suggestion for men are found in Jesus's lineage th- covenant of circumcision remain un- unbroken line of circumcised males



## The Hybrid Engendering of Jesus and the Gender of Israel

185

BRUCE ROSENSTOCK

The Third Theorem of Part Two reads: "Both Israelites and gentiles, by entering into the Catholic faith through the gateway of holy baptism, do not remain two peoples or diverse nations [gentes], but, from two separately arriving groups, one new people is created" (131). Cartagena describes the conflict between the new paganism and the Church as one between the brutal power of the gentile nations and the meekness of Christ. Cartagena sees the new paganism as a recrudescence of the same gentile savagery which initially confronted the Church in its earliest missions. In the early history of the Church this gentile savagery was defeated by the physical meekness and passivity of the martyrs whose only defense was the word of God. Cartagena describes pagan brutality as arising from a valorization among non-Jews, both in antiquity and in his own day, of masculine physical prowess. He declares that Christ's ancestry, reaching back to Abraham, includes no male who was uncircumcised, a fact which signals God's own scorn for pagan virility in favor of a new virility which is self-abnegating (symbolized by the covenant of circumcision) and sublimated into a spiritual prowess in the realm of the word. Cartagena points out, however, that among the female ancestors of Jesus were two non-Israelites: Rahab and Ruth. Rahab, the prostitute who saves the lives of spies sent by Joshua to reconnoiter Jericho, was the grandmother of Boaz; Ruth, wed to Boaz after she leaves Moab with Naomi, is the great-grandmother of David. Gentile "blood" has thus already mingled with Israelite "blood" in Jesus's engendering. Cartagena sees the engendering of Jesus as a typological prefiguration of the conjunction of gentiles and Jews into one new people possessing a new spiritualized virility. Since Cartagena sees the oneness of humanity to be the culmination of redemption, it is Jesus' engendering rather than his death or his resurrection which, for Cartagena, holds the key to salvation history. Christ for Cartagena represents the unity of gentile and Jewish peoples within the single body of the Church in virtue of his lineage. The fact that Jesus's genealogical relationship to the gentiles is mediated through women is "not lacking sacred mystery," Cartagena declares (2.3.2, 134). He offers as his first suggestion for why gentile women but not gentile men are found in Jesus's lineage the idea that only in this way can the covenant of circumcision remain unbroken from Abraham to Jesus. The unbroken line of circumcised males back to Abraham demonstrates that





follows upon this, Cartagena rejects the negative cultural image of the Jew as coward, and he goes on to claim that the converted Jew can overcome the long habit of military ineptitude and its consequence, timidity. But in the earlier passages which we have just been considering, Cartagena adopts a different and more challenging line of defense. He turns the cultural stereotype of the Jew as effeminate and timid against itself, viewing timidity as rather "gentleness," and declaring that gentle masculinity has no share in the constitution of Jesus's humanity. When Cartagena declares that the blood of gentle males was not present in Jesus, he is surely striking at the racial pride in "blood purity" on the part of the anti-converso party in Spain. And when he says that Christ rejects the virility of the pagans in favor of the meekness revealed by Israel's heroes and the early Christian martyrs, Christ's "sons from among the strangers," he is also attacking the cultural stereotypes which identify the Jew as a coward, and the "pure blood" Christian as a valiant warrior.

Once more we find Cartagena engaged in the disruptive strategy of hybrid writing. The vaunted strength of the gentle male is turned into a despised and discarded violence, having nothing to do with Jesus's masculinity. Previously we have seen how Cartagena unsettles the assumption that "gentility" means "nobility"; now he questions whether either of those terms has anything to do with "virility" as properly understood. Cartagena is redeploying the terms through which the nation views itself in order to reassemble them in the image of a nation where "hybrid blood" rather than "pure blood" is valorized as true nobility and true virility.

this context of exalted male aggression and extraversion, the 'otherness' of Jewish men could not have been plainer. Over and over again the text makes the point that the Jews' locus of activity is the home, while that of Christian Castilian men is the battlefield; see *Women, Jews, and Muslims in the Texts of Reconquest Castile* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 78. Is it possible that Cartagena's likening of the Jewish people to daughters within the home of their Father is a revaluation of the image of the "homebound" Jewish male? A parallel revaluation occurs in earlier rabbinic culture in which Torah study was viewed as a retreat into a secluded, "feminine" space and away from the public, "out-of-doors" military pursuits of the Roman male; however, the "feminine" space of Torah study is given precedence over the "masculine" space of the battleground. See Daniel Boyarin, *Urbane Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Male* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), chapter 3. For an examination of the effect of this stereotype of the Jew as effeminate on a sixteenth-century Sabbatean and former crypto-Jew, see Bruce Rosenstock, "Messianisms, Machisms, and 'Mar-ranism': The Case of Abraham Miguel Cardoso," *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, ed. Daniel Boyarin and Daniel Itzkovitz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).



We have seen previously how Cartagena compares Israel to daughters waiting for "foreign" sons to join them in marriage within their father's home, the New Jerusalem. Although this may seem to contradict the idea of a female-mediated gentility in the lineage of Jesus (foreign women, not men, join Israel), in fact there is perfect consistency here. Just as a gentile male when he would marry a Jewish woman according to the "law of Moses," must convert and be circumcised, so when gentile males enter the New Jerusalem and join with "faithful Israelites" as one people, they must convert to the God of Israel, as we have seen Cartagena expressly state, and be "circumcised" (symbolically, of course) of their gentile virility. The Jewish male who enters the New Jerusalem does not "leave his father's home" to do so, but only needs to acknowledge the spiritual nature of his physical circumcision, and this acknowledgment is the fullest expression of circumcision, not its annulment. The transition from "faithless" to "faithful" Israelite is paralleled by the Christian's transition from unmarried daughter to wife.

In rewriting the meaning of "conversion" and reinscribing it within a scenario of return to the paternal home (spiritual Jerusalem), Cartagena unsettles the cultural binarisms which, in his view, threaten to destroy the Church and, with it, the nation which is carrying forward its mission. All the terms seem to cross—the Jew is not the convert, but the gentile is; the Jew is the female, but the gentile must be feminized in order to marry her; the Jew is at home, and the gentile is "dispersed"; whereas "gentility" and "nobility" are not co-extensive, the nobility of the Jewish people will return again. Cartagena has unsettled these cultural binarisms in order to re-imagine a national community in which hybridity is sacralized and "blood purity" is viewed as the return of the pagan past.

## Conclusion

Postcolonial studies dealing with "nation and narration" have claimed that the "normative" construction of national identity projects an image of seamless historic continuity leading to an ever-new and youthful present which embraces the people in a plenitudinous contemporaneity. In this normative construction of national identity, all the traces of the nation's hybrid origins are obliterated, and all contravening discourses of hybridity are repressed. Cartagena seems to straddle the normative and the hybrid ideas of the nation and, if we accept Castro's reading of Spanish national self-construction, Cartagena is the first in a long line of writers marked by such ambivalence. As an exponent of the right of Castile to rule the

Peninsula, Cartagena reactivates the definitive for later Spanish history. Cartagena is committed to a principle of singularity of the nation, namely, the fulfillment of each people's divine principle, Cartagena exemplifies the nation typically seeks to suppress. The dynamic tension between the discursively represented in postcolonial conflict between the modern imperatives that the "postcolonial" and the fifteenth-century Castile; perhaps the Americas. Castro.

One last observation is in order origins of the nation, Benedict Aron ethnically defined nationality among different by the accident of their independent countries of the former and sixteenth centuries there arose Peninsula, namely, the conversos; different by the accident of their descent. When at the close of the sixteenth caste settled in Amsterdam, they desecrated an image of a diaspora language, and hybrid ancestry (though its members continued to live as Castilians only from other *peninsulares*, but also prided themselves on their "noble" played a messianic fervor in their particular attraction for Sabbatean diaspora "nation" comes closer than dream of a hybrid people with a un-

Peninsula, Cartagena reactivates the "neo-Gothic thesis" which becomes definitive for later Spanish historiography. As a converso, however, Cartagena is committed to a principle which runs counter to the ethnic singularity of the nation, namely, the hybridization of Jew and non-Jew in fulfillment of each people's divine mission. As an exponent of the latter principle, Cartagena exemplifies the very discourse of hybridity which the nation typically seeks to suppress. Thus, Cartagena allows us to see the dynamic tension between the discourses of nation and of hybridity, typically represented in postcolonial criticism as characteristic of the conflict between the modern imperial nation and its colonial subjects. It seems that the "postcolonial" and "postmodern" may be prefigured in fifteenth-century Castile; perhaps this would have come as no surprise to Américo Castro.

One last observation is in order. In his path-breaking study of the origins of the nation, Benedict Anderson points to the beginning of ethnically defined nationality among the "creoles" (Spaniards marked as different by the accident of their birth in the colonies) of the newly independent countries of the former Spanish empire. But in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there arose an internal "creole" class within the Peninsula, namely, the conversos: Spaniards and Portuguese marked as different by the accident of their descent from one or more Jewish ancestors. When at the close of the sixteenth century members of this creole caste settled in Amsterdam, they described themselves as "the Nation" and constructed an image of a diasporic community with a shared culture, language, and hybrid ancestry (though not a shared religion, since some of its members continued to live as Catholics) which distinguished them not only from other *peninsulares*, but also from other Jews. These creoles often prided themselves on their "noble" hybrid ancestry. Many of them displayed a messianic fervor in their religiosity, manifesting itself in their particular attraction for Sabbateanism.<sup>22</sup> It may well be that this creole diaspora "nation" comes closer than any other to embodying Cartagena's dream of a hybrid people with a unifying divine mission.

*University of California at Davis*

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed discussion of the Amsterdam community of former conversos and their communal self-definition, see Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).